

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for conducting electronic commerce, comprising:
electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, a comparison shopping site ("CompShop"), and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;
running, by the CompShop, a query on a plurality of electronic stores carrying said the item, and asking for a price of the item; and
selectively determining, by at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores functioning as a "smartStore", an offer price of said the item and selectively returning one of a static price and a modified price,
said the modified price resulting from said the at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores learning the a best offer price received by said the CompShop from all of said the plurality of electronic stores.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
returning a standard price by ~~the eStore at least one of the plurality of electronic stores~~ determined not to be a SmartStore the smartStore.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
sending, by the SmartStore smartStore, a request to the [[“]]CompShop[[”]] asking for comparative prices of said the item; and
determining, by the SmartStore smartStore, whether the an asking offer price is the best offer price that can be offered, wherein if the asking offer price is determined to be the a lowest price, then the SmartStore smartStore returns its standard static price.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
if the asking offer price is determined not to be the a lowest price, then adjusting, by the smartStore, the price; and

returning a new price to the [[“]]CompShop[”]].

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one of the electronic stores automatically changes the price depending on [[a]] the customer for the item asking for the price and what the lowest price is as recorded by the CompShop.
6. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
maintaining, by the smartStore, a list of comparison shopping sites.
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising:
if a request is made from other than [[a]] the comparison shopping site, then returning by the smartStore, ~~a standard~~ the static price; and
if the request for [[a]] the price is from a ~~comparison shopping site~~ CompShop, then submitting by the smartStore a request to the [[“]]CompShop[”]] or another ~~comparison shopping site~~ CompShop to get a list of all comparison prices for the item.
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8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising:
when ~~said~~ the smartStore obtains ~~a comparative list of pricing~~ the list of all comparison prices, determining whether ~~said~~ the smartStore can offer a lowest price.
9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8, wherein ~~said~~ the smartStore determines whether it can afford to offer ~~a lower~~ the lowest price based upon the list of all comparison prices and its own cost price and required profit margin.
10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
if ~~said~~ the smartStore can offer ~~a lower~~ the lowest price, then returning ~~said~~ lower price the lowest price to the CompShop request.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising:
if said the smartStore cannot offer a lower the lowest price, then returning its standard static price to the CompShop.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
returning, by the ["]CompShop["], the a list of prices to the user customer.
13. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
selecting, by the user customer, based upon the prices received, a choice of one of the plurality of electronic store stores for providing said the item.
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14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said the item comprises a product.
15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said the item comprises a service.
16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said the best offer price is the a lowest offer price.
17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein said the best offer price is the a highest offer price.
18. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
caching, by the CompShop, said prices received from said the plurality of electronic stores.
19. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

caching, by the smartStore, a list of prices received from said the CompShop.

20. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said the smartStore selectively visits said the CompShop, such that information from said the CompShop is cached by said the smartStore for a comparison with a price request occurring between visits to said the CompShop.

21. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a price comparison is performed on one of the an identical item and a substantially identical item, and
wherein a graded price is offered on said the substantially identical item.

22. (currently amended) A system for conducting electronic commerce between a customer and one of a plurality of electronic stores, comprising:

a plurality of electronic stores; and

a comparison shopping site operatively coupled to said the plurality of electronic stores and a customer interested in purchasing an item,

wherein at least one of the plurality of electronic stores comprises a smartStore;
and

an electronic medium for linking each of the customer, each of the plurality of electronic stores and the comparison shop shopping site together electronically,

wherein said the comparison shopping site runs a query on the plurality of electronic stores and requests an offer price of the item, and

wherein the smartStore determines a predetermined offer price of said the item from the plurality of electronic stores and selectively returning returns one of a static price and a modified price, said the modified price resulting from said the smartStore learning the a lowest offer price received by said the comparison shopping site from all of said the plurality of electronic stores.

23. (currently amended) A system for performing electronic commerce, comprising:

a comparison shopping site ([["]])CompShop(["]));

means for electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, the comparison shopping site CompShop, and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;

means for running, by the CompShop, a query on all of a plurality of electronic stores it is aware of, asking for a price of the item;

means for determining, by at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores, an offer price of said the item and returning one of a static price and a modified price, said the modified price resulting from said at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores learning the a lowest offer price received by said the CompShop from all of said the plurality of electronic stores.

24. (currently amended) A signal-bearing medium tangibly embodying a program of machine-readable instructions executable by a digital processing apparatus to perform a method of conducting electronic commerce, said the method comprising:

electronically visiting, by a customer interested in shopping for an item, a comparison shopping site ([["]])CompShop(["])), and inquiring about the item and comparative prices thereof;

running, by the [["]])CompShop(["]), a query on all a plurality of electronic stores it is aware of asking for a price of the item; and

determining, by at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores, an offer price of said the item and returning one of a static price and a modified price, said the modified price resulting from said the at least one of said the plurality of electronic stores learning the a lowest offer price received by said the CompShop from all of said the plurality of electronic stores.